



Arthritis and Coexisting Chronic Health Conditions

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Objective

There is considerable evidence that people with arthritis are more likely to experience multiple chronic conditions/diseases when compared to persons without arthritis. Despite the importance of coexisting chronic conditions/diseases, there were no Utah health statistics that focused on combinations of arthritis and other chronic conditions/diseases. Therefore, this study was initiated to compare the presence of nine chronic conditions/diseases in Utah adults with and without arthritis.

Setting

- ▶ In 2001, approximately 471,000 Utah adults' 18 or older had arthritis and/or chronic joint symptoms (CJS).
- ▶ More Utah women than men reported arthritis and/or CJS (35% vs. 29%).

Method

The 2001 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey was used to identify the proportion of persons with arthritis who also had other chronic conditions including:

- ▶ **angina/coronary heart disease**
- ▶ **asthma**
- ▶ **cardiovascular diseases**
- ▶ **diabetes**
- ▶ **heart attack**
- ▶ **high blood cholesterol**
- ▶ **hypertension and**
- ▶ **stroke**

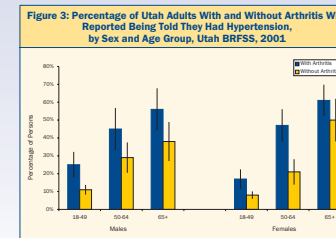
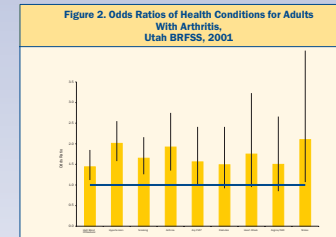
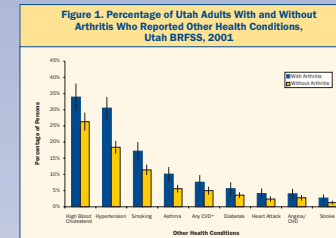
Results were weighted to the 2001 Utah population, with respect to age, gender, and residence, and data were adjusted to eliminate bias for age, gender, body mass index, physical activity and smoking.

Results

For all nine conditions considered, the prevalence of multiple conditions was greater in the persons with arthritis and/or CJS. (Figure 1)

The increased prevalence of hypertension in persons with arthritis or CJS compared to those without (31% vs. 18%, odds ratio = 2) was particularly impressive. Significant odds ratios were observed for asthma, high blood cholesterol, smoking, hypertension and stroke. If the confidence interval bar does not include 1.0 the odds ratio is considered statistically significant. (Figure 2)

Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between arthritis and hypertension was especially significant in both males and females 18-49 and females 50-64. (Figure 3)



Conclusion

From these data it is clear there are coexistent conditions/diseases that are affected by the presence of arthritis. It is especially clear there is an increased odds of hypertension among Utah adults with arthritis. This relationship is particularly important given the high proportion of adults with hypertension in Utah's population. Therefore, better identification, understanding and management of these coexisting conditions has great potential for improving the quality of life among persons with arthritis.

Learning Objectives

Coexisting chronic conditions play a role in managing arthritis and/or CJS and efforts aimed at treating these multiple conditions should be investigated and implemented when proven effective.